

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please replace the abstract, paragraph [0045] beginning at page 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0045] A method of making a ceramic composite comprising a mesoporous matrix is provided. The mesoporous matrix comprises a ceramic matrix, which has a plurality of pores dispersed therethrough. The plurality of pores form a mesoporous network, and an array of ceramic nanoparticles templated within the mesoporous network. The array forms an ordered structure within the mesoporous network, and each of the plurality of ceramic nanoparticles has at least one dimension of less than about 100 nm. The method comprises the steps of: a) providing a ceramic matrix material; b) forming a templated mesoporous network within the matrix material, wherein the mesoporous network has a controlled pore size; c) infiltrating the templated mesoporous network with an oxide precursor; and d) converting the oxide precursor into inorganic nanoparticles within the templated mesoporous network to form the ceramic composite.

Please replace paragraph [0006] beginning at page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0006] Nanotechnology provides an ideal opportunity to expand control over multiple length scales by allowing control over structure and function at the nanoscale. Although nanosize powders of inorganic materials are readily available, they do not lend themselves to the techniques of consolidation and sintering. One problem associated with incorporating nanosize powders into such prior-art methods of producing composites is the retention of the resulting nanostructure at the sintering temperature.